

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 ERDA-05 ERDE-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01
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-----073441 261815Z /41

O R 261549Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1507
INFO SECDEF WASH DC
JCS WASH DC
CNO
CINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 6337

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MARR, SP
SUBJECT: NPW VISITS TO SPAIN

1. I MET WITH 1ST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT
FOR DEFENSE AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE MINISTER, LT. GENERAL GUTIERREZ-
MELLADO, AT NOON, AUGUST 25. I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD BE
RETURNING TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK AND THAT BEFORE
DOING SO I WANTED TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH HIM ON A
NUMBER OF QUESTIONS WHICH WERE OF CONCERN IN THE
MILITARY FIELD.

2. I TOLD GUTIERREZ-MELLADO THAT I HAD BEEN SURPRISED
AND DISAPPOINTED THAT AFTER THE LONG PERIOD IN
WHICH THE SPANISH AUTHORITIES HAD CONSIDERED THE
QUESTION OF AN NPW VISIT TO PALMA, WE HAD HAD AN
ALMOST IMMEDIATE TURNDOWN AFTER ITS PRESENTATION
TO THE POLITICAL-MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS
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COMMITTEE (PMAA). I SAID THAT I HAD PERSONALLY KEPT
IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH SENIOR SPANISH NAVAL AUTHORITIES
AND, DURING THE TIME THE SPANISH NAVY AND THE SPANISH
NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY HAD BEEN STUDYING THE TECHNICAL
ASPECTS OF AN NPW VISIT TO PALMA, I HAD RECEIVED
NOTHING BUT HOPEFUL SIGNS THAT BOTH THE NAVY AND

THE NUCLEAR ENERGY PEOPLE WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A VISIT. I HAD ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH WITH SENIOR LEVELS OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE TO KEEP THEM INFORMED OF OUR HOPE THAT A VISIT BY A NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE TO PALMA WOULD BE APPROVED. AT NO TIME HAD I RECEIVED ANY NEGATIVE REACTION OR ANY INDICATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD DISAPPROVE THE VISIT. AND YET, WHEN THE TIME CAME TO MAKE THE FORMAL REQUEST TO THE PMAA, THE COUNCIL MINISTERS HAD GIVEN A NEGATIVE ANSWER WITHIN A MATTER OF HOURS.

3. I TOLD GUTIERREZ-MELLADO THAT I KNEW THAT HE, AS A MILITARY MAN, UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR PLANNING PURPOSES OUR NAVY HAD TO SCHEDULE PORT VISITS WELL IN ADVANCE NOT ONLY FOR OPERATIONAL REASONS BUT ALSO IN RELATION TO THE VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION OF CREW MORALE AND RECREATION. THE SUDDEN TURNDOWN HAD CREATED SERIOUS OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS FOR OUR NAVY. IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED I FELT THAT IT WAS DESIRABLE TO COME DIRECTLY TO HIM TO SEE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY WAY WE COULD WORK OUR ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY THIS SORT OF THING COULD BE AVOIDED IN THE FUTURE AND WHEREBY OUR NAVY COULD HAVE GREATER ACCESS TO SPANISH COMMERCIAL PORTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

4. I TOLD GUTIERREZ-MELLADO THAT WE APPRECIATED THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TAKEN BY THE GOS WITH REGARD TO CONFIDENTIAL

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VISITS TO ROTA. THIS WAS ENORMOUSLY HELPFUL IN RELATION TO IN-CHOP AND OUT-CHOP OF NPW'S. HOWEVER, THE LACK OF FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO OTHER SPANISH COMMERCIAL PORTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WAS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO US.

5. I TOLD GUTIERREZ-MELLADO THAT WE PLANNED TO SUBMIT SHORTLY TO THE PMAA A ROUTINE REQUEST FOR A VISIT BY AN SSN TO ROTA IN OCTOBER. I ASSUMED THAT THIS WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM. I THEN MENTIONED THAT THE NPTG CONSISTING OF NIMITZ AND TWO CRUISERS WOULD BE COMING BACK INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN IN EARLY DECEMBER AND IT WAS OUR INTENTION TO SEEK APPROVAL FOR THE NIMITZ AND ONE OF THE CRUISERS TO GO INTO ROTA FOR A 3 - 4 DAY VISIT AT THAT TIME. IT WOULD BE ALMOST A YEAR SINCE THE NIMITZ AND ONE OF ITS ACCOMPANYING CRUISERS HAD BEEN TO ROTA, THE LAST VISIT HAVING TAKEN PLACE IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR. I ALSO SAID THAT WE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO HAVE THE SECOND CRUISER GO INTO PALMA, OF, IF NOT THAT, BARCELONA. I EXPLAINED THAT WHILE I RECOGNIZED THAT A MECHANISM, THE PMAA, HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED TO HANLE THESE REQUESTS, I FELT ITS LEVEL AND PROCEDURAL RIGIDITY MADE IT DIFFICULT TO

DEAL WITH THESE IMPORTANT AND SENSITIVE REQUESTS IN A TIMELY FASHION.
I HAD THEREFORE COME TO HIM TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN AND
TO ASK HIM TO CONSIDER THE NAVY'S NEED FOR GREATER
FLEXIBILITY IN THE NPW VISITS. I SAID I WOULD APPRECIATE
LEARNING FROM HIM WHAT REACTION WE MIGHT EXPECT FROM THE
GOS ON THE DECEMBER VISITS AS I HAD DESCRIBED THEM.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 6337

6. GUTIERREZ-MELLADO ASKED ONE TECHNICAL QUESTION AND
THAT WAS WHETHER THE CRUISER THAT WE WANTED TO GO TO
PALMA OR BARCELONA, SOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CONVENTIONAL
SHIP TO BE ABLE TO ACT AS A TOW IN THE EVENT OF AN
EMERGENCY. I SAID I THOUGHT SO SINCE THIS WAS A CONDITION
WHICH THE SPANISH NAVY HAD PREVIOUSLY LAID DOWN FOR NPW
VISITS TO PALMA AND WHICH WE HAD ACCEPTED, IN RELATION
TO THE DISAPPROVED SSN VISIT. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT
NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES STILL EVOKED A STRONG NEGATIVE
PUBLIC REACTION.

7. GUTIERREZ-MELLADO SAID THAT HE WOULD ENDEAVOR
TO OBTAIN SOME INFORMAL INDICATION AS TO THE GOS'S
REACTION TO THE PROPOSED DECEMBER VISITS. HE AGREED
THAT I MADE LITTLE SENSE TO GO THROUGH ALL THE
FORMALITIES OF THE PMAA IF IN FACT IT WERE KNOWN IN
ADVANCE THAT A CERTAIN REQUEST WOULD NOT BE APPROVED

BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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8. WHILE MAKING NO DIRECT COMMENT ON WHAT THE GOS ATTITUDE MIGHT BE ON THE USE OF PALMA OR BARCELONA IN DECEMBER, GUTIERREZ-MELLADO STRESSED THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SPAIN HAD UNDERGONE CONSIDERABLE CHANGE SINCE THE TREATY HAD GONE INTO EFFECT AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND THOSE OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED IN THE TREATY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSE US-SPANISH RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MILITARY FIELD, THERE WERE INCREASING LIMITS POSED ON WHAT THE GOS COULD POLITICALLY DO WITHOUT CREATING FOR ITSELF, AND INDEED FOR US-SPANISH RELATIONSHIP, SERIOUS ADVERSE PROBLEMS.

9. FINALLY, GUTIERREZ-MELLADO INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THE US NAVY COULD PROVIDE SOME INDICATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ITS NEEDS OVER THE NEXT YEAR. THE TWO NAVIES COULD CONSIDER THE MATTER AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL AND AN OVERALL PLAN, ALLOWING FOR EMERGENCY AND OPERATIONAL CHANGES, COULD BE SENT FORWARD FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL.

10. COMMENT. I PLAN TO CALL GUTIERREZ-MELLADO BEFORE I LEAVE FOR WASHINGTON NEXT THURSDAY TO SEE WHAT HE HAS DONE ABOUT THE DECEMBER VISITS AND WHAT THE PROSPECTS MAY BE. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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To: STATE
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